

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Many today are deeply ambivalent towards spiritual questions. On the one hand, most people feel positive towards Jesus and would like it if there were answers to the big questions of meaning and of death. On the other hand, they feel very negative towards 'organised religion', they suspect that taking the Bible seriously could affect their lifestyle in ways they wouldn't like and they believe there's no way of really knowing about 'the God questions'. As life's comfortable, exploring spiritual questions could be disturbing and there's no real way of knowing either way, why give it much thought?

Given the cultural assumptions of our day this is understandable. If there's no truth, only opinions, if the best I can hope for is to live a comfortable and fun life, then what's the point of getting mired in empty, abstract irrelevant philosophy or dull, old fashioned, restrictive moralism? But what if the cultural assumptions of our day are wrong?

What if there is a solid, convincing and winsome answer to the deepest questions of our life and death? What if that answer is not some abstract philosophical speculation but a real life lived in human history? What if that life could address our insecurity, fear and loneliness? What if that life could speak to the deep sense of meaninglessness that sometimes haunts our life, or the dark and cynical despair in our culture? What if that life had the power to undo our death?

Just for a moment, suspend your disbelief. Imagine all of this was possible: that you could come to a place of believing that this person was deeply credible and satisfying, that you could face life and death with a strong, reliable, satisfying sense of meaning and hope. Would you be interested? How much would that be worth to you? What would you give in exchange for that hope? For what would you be willing to forfeit that hope?

This, of course, is the claim of Jesus of Nazareth. The Biblical diagnosis of the world which we experience every day is that on the one hand it's wonderful beyond all telling, and on the other hand that it's ruined and horrifically defaced. The reason for the wonder is that the world is intended to reflect its creator. The reason for the brokenness is that humanity has rejected our creator and embraced evil.

Jesus claims in his life, torture and execution to have gone head to head with evil. Evil has done its worst to him and killed him in a cruel, unjust and brutal way. But the hinge on which history turns is the claim that after three days he rose from the dead. If Jesus rose from the dead, then he's overcome death. If death is the ultimate consequence of evil, then he's overcome evil. And if he's overcome evil then he has the power to overcome evil and death in the world, to transform my life and undo my death.

The life of Jesus and the resurrection claim to be historical events which can be investigated and tested. If this is true, would you be willing to consider it?